COLE BLEASE GRAHAM [CBG]: This is Tape 21, Side 1, an interview with Governor Robert E. McNair as a part of the McNair Oral History Project of the South Carolina Department of Archives and History. Today's date is May 9, 1983. Governor, we're moving now to a new topic which, I guess, generally, we could label civil rights and human rights with all the variety of change that that implies. Would it be possible to set the tone, let's say, for South Carolina in the 1960's or before the 1960's and just tell what it was like as a political decision-maker, let's say, up until the time that you became governor?

ROBERT E. McNAIR [REM]: I suppose you really get back to the fifties because that's when things began to happen, 1954, with the decision [Brown v. Board of Education] that was handed down and then with all that took place following that, "separate but equal" and the movement there and the beginnings of white citizens' councils--not Ku Klux Klan-type but that really were sort of the business and political leadership people throughout the state who were working, their feeling was, to preserve a way of life, really is what their concern was. They thought a way of life that we had always lived was being threatened and about to be destroyed. So you had, really, a separation of the races, and things began to be black and white. Prior to that, I don't think we thought of it in that way although we had everything separate and, as we'd said earlier, the black children had to walk to school and go to shortened school sessions so they could walk to work or not go at all and nothing be done to them.

With the coming of all of this, we began to improve facilities, began to recognize that really we needed to get them in school and get them educated so that they could be productive in life later on. So I think people began to look on what was happening as a threat to a way of

life. And thus you had two groups of people, the business leadership that had always had what we referred to as good relationships, good communications, and then you had the other group of citizens out there who had worked physically for a living and depended on their physical labors. They looked on this as a threat to them, a threat to their jobs and to their working habits and working relationships.

CBG: Do you think this in part reflects the change in agriculture in South Carolina? Is this the way of life that these middle class protestors were talking about?

REM: I think it is, and then in the more industrialized areas, you know, we later ran into unexpected difficulty we hadn't anticipated. They looked on it as being a threat to their jobs, you know, in the textile industry.

CBG: Cheaper labor.

REM: There's where the blacks had been the janitors and the clean-up people, sweeping up and cleaning up, and suddenly they were taking on jobs in production, the same kinds of jobs, working side by side. So it really was a real change in lifestyle and sort of a threat to them in the job place, the market place, out there. Here, and particularly in the rural areas, we didn't have the problems they had in some of the other parts of the country where blacks were moving into the neighborhoods. We sort of lived together anyway, in no set pattern, and even in the small towns there would be the black section, but at the same time it would sort of be all right in the middle of everything. You may have a block of one and then others, there'd be houses scattered around. So we had communications that didn't exist elsewhere, but beyond communications, it was, I suppose, the same as it was in other parts of the South.

CBG: Was there much of a consciousness of, let's say, black frustration or black rage or the black brain drain, that while these communications patterns were there and there wasn't the fear of anonymity, but nonetheless there was a frustration?

REM: I think it was developing, and it was obvious because they read and saw what was happening elsewhere in the country, and people began to come in. Somebody would come into a community, and that's when you referred to the outsider coming in stirring up trouble. Of course, he tried the churches, and then he'd try the schools, and invariably he would find a response in a school or a college particularly. That told us that there were your brighter ones who were frustrated because in the past they'd gotten an education and either had to go to work at the same job their fathers had or go someplace else. I think that was where the frustration really came out, around the college towns and among the more educated groups. They were susceptible to it.

CBG: What was the typical profile of this outsider? Was this an educated black, say, a native who had gone and come back . . .

REM: A lot of times it was somebody like that who'd gone outside and who had become a part of one of the movements around the country and had come back home. Other times it would be others who were parts of movements. What we had then, I think, as people saw what was beginning to happen--the same thing developed there that does in any movement, competition for leadership--and we had competition in the black communities for leadership. So you'd have people coming in who were trying to form some new group as competition for the NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People]. They'd always respected it, but it had never been aggressive, you know. In their minds it didn't take the leadership role in so many of the areas and activities that a lot of the

young people thought. So you had all these new groups forming and new leadership forming, and ultimately the national leaders would come in and meet with groups, organize them, and then they in turn would occupy leadership roles.

CBG: Was the organized white community like, let's say, the Ku Klux Klan--did that really exist, and, if it did, was it really a menace to public safety?

REM: The Ku Klux Klan really didn't exist. It was here, but it didn't exist, and it wasn't a menace. We had had that under, I think, real good control for a long time, and it existed more in the minds of people than anywhere else. There'd be a pocket. There was a pocket of Klansmen up in one section of Spartanburg County and near Gaffney, and then there would be a pocket in certain other areas of the state, but as an organization that had any influence or created any real trouble, it didn't actually exist at that time. The white citizens' councils were the ones that really had the political influence, and they were the ones that grew into sort of a statewide organization. That sort of carried right on through--the resistance leadership--throughout that period of time.

CBG: Would you say though that the main theme was one of negotiation in South Carolina, that even the resistance was not violence prone?

REM: Yes. Well, looking back on it, I still think so. We kept saying then that we had communications and that we could solve our problems better if they'd let us do it internally and we didn't need all the external forces coming in trying to really to stir up and to make it more difficult than it already was. We had good communications, and we tried to handle it in that way and tried to avoid what we'd seen elsewhere. I still think that the experiences in Alabama and Mississippi contributed a

lot to our ability to do it this way. In many of those areas it demonstrated to the white leadership and to the whites generally what was coming. But also the blacks saw what could happen when you got into open hostility and almost open warfare because they were the ones that always got hurt. I mean they were the ones that suffered the most, and I think the leadership recognized that. Our theme was sort of, for reasons of trying to keep everybody comfortable, let's get it in the courthouse rather than in the streets and try to resolve it within the law while we had communications and conferences instead of confrontations.

CBG: Were you involved, or do you have any reflection, let's say, on what might be the bellwether of change and that is the 1948 Dixiecrat movement across the South. Was that appealing to you as a young legislator lawyer?

REM: I really don't think so. I have to think back.

CBG: Yes.

REM: I really don't think so. We were in law school, just coming out of law school, really, during that period of time and we didn't get caught up in it for some reason. Maybe it was the fact that we'd all just come home from the war. You know, we'd been associated with people from all around and sort of had maybe a deep inside feeling of what the transition was going to be like. There wasn't a lot of excitement except in certain groups in the law school at that period of time. I'm not sure, you know, that for a long time Senator [J. Strom] Thurmond, who led that movement, didn't suffer from it rather than benefit among the younger people, particularly, the college and young lawyer groups. They seemed to look on it as being sort of a rebellious movement in itself rather than a real serious effort.

CBG: So I guess, really, the *Brown* decision would be the first event that would begin to focus on the problem of separate treatment for blacks in the South.

REM: Yes. Everybody said that was a landmark decision.

CBG: Yes.

REM: Separate but equal facilities. South Carolina had moved ahead of the rest of the South in trying to cope with that because, as we've discussed earlier, we came with the sales tax and a massive sort of educational revolution in the state. We immediately instituted a statewide transportation system, and that meant all the black children were transported. We had to provide equal facilities so most of the funds from the sales tax went first to building schools for black children and trying to upgrade the quality of education there.

We moved very quickly, and I think that operated two ways. One way is we'd spent all this money, we'd done all these things, we'd done more than anybody else to comply with the 1aw, and that made it difficult when we found that wasn't going to work any longer. On the other hand, having done all of that, it made it easier for us to move into the integrated system because we already had the transportation program out there. We already had the physical facilities out there that we could integrate and integrate in many areas into what had been predominantly black schools prior to that time.

CBG: Is this what was basically going on from, say, 1954 to 1970, a patient, measured approach to physical development?

REM: It started, really, yes. We came in 1950 with the new group . . .

CBG: Yes.

REM: . . . sort of the new leadership role of doing things for education, of improving the quality of education and trying to get South

Carolina moving forward in that area along with jobs and job opportunities for people. I think that was all part of it, and then we moved on into this period where everybody's attitude was that we were willing to go as far as we had to go. We sort of approached it like that, I think. The communications started, yes, there was communications early. It's hard to recall what Mr. Byrnes attitude was at that time, what his relationship was, but there were black leaders certainly who were in the forefront of that movement because they recognized what they were getting in the way of good schools and good transportation. They were getting better teachers in the classroom, and this big movement really was benefiting them tremendously. So they began to be very active in all of that, and I think, again, we began to produce some leadership in the school program. Black principals began to emerge as leaders in the community, the church people--of course, the NAACP was basically and predominantly bottomed in the church, among the church people. The ministers made up the leadership in it. So from all of this came a group of leaders in the black community that had open communications with the white leadership.

CBG: Were there other issues developing along with education, for example, voting registration or public accommodations generally?

REM: Well that all came sort of one thing right after the other. The public accommodations section of the Civil Rights Act was passed in Washington as a result of the refusal to let them sit at the counters in some of the major national department stores. They had targeted them first because they were national in scope and felt like those were the ones that they could deal with, rather than pick out a local merchant with only local interest. That had started and then came the Civil Rights Act from the federal government and then the Voting Rights Act.

CBG: The Voting Rights Act of 1965, the Civil Rights Act was 1964.

REM: What really happened was with the coming of President [John] Kennedy and then his assassination and the coming of Lyndon Johnson, I think President Johnson sort of felt a strong commitment that he needed to accomplish all of these things that had been talked about. So he was able to rush through all this reform legislation, all the civil rights legislation, and we got them all in sort of a bunch at one time. There were, you know, dealing with the schools, the Civil Rights Act, the Voting Rights Act, all sort of one right behind the other, and that's what brought on the big confrontations during that period of the mid-sixties.

CBG: Just to maybe digress for a second, how did voting registration work in traditional South Carolina before these laws came down?

REM: Well, you know, before that we only had voting by blacks in the general elections. As I was growing up as a young boy, I can recall there were only two or three blacks who had voted and they voted historically, and they were black Republicans. We took the primary out of the law in order to avoid court control of it after Judge Waring ruled that we had to open the primaries up. We'd rather take it out of the law and repeal the laws and put it in as a club, as a private thing. So there was no black voting in the Democratic primaries, which were tantamount to election. That's when they came in and held that really was tantamount to election. So following that, there was minimal participation in the primary. In most of the heavy black areas, I suppose there were practically no participation because it just wasn't allowed, and we came from there on into partial participation. I recall when I ran for lieutenant governor there was beginning to be, during that

period of time, more and more participation from the blacks in the primary and on into the general elections. By the time the Voting Rights Act came, we still only had, I suppose, minimal participation, not large numbers, not enough to really be a factor until the Voting Rights Act came along.

CBG: Did you ever hear anybody discuss that this maybe was something that should be changed internally?

REM: There'd been discussions, yes. There'd been discussions about participation in the primary. Matthew Perry, Reverend [I. DeQuincy] Newman, all of those, you know, were active, out front, and talking about participation in the political process, in voting, and there had been normal discussions about it, how it could be dealt with. I think it was beginning to be accepted, and there was beginning to be more of the blacks participating. The laws which set qualifications for voting limited them by reading and writing. We had the old owning of property, which really eliminated the masses among the blacks because of the widespread illiteracy, and also the fact that very few, not large numbers, were actually property owners, so they didn't pay property tax. Then we had the poll tax, which stayed in existence for a long time. That was there just simply if you didn't go pay your poll tax and bring your receipt, you couldn't vote. That actually had no reason except to discourage voting. The literacy and the property ownership was sort of a thing with, I reckon, a deep-seated belief through the years that people ought to own property and ought to be able to read and write if they were going to participate in the process.

CBG: Did the reapportionment decisions have something to do with opening up avenues for political participation at the local level?

REM: Yes, but reapportionment came after.

CBG: After.

REM: The Voting Rights Act was passed, and that required you to register all of the blacks and struck down all the requirements. All of the education and literacy requirements, property ownership, the poll tax, everything became nonexistent. They set up a process to do that where they had federal registers who would come in to the targeted areas or in areas where there was any resistance, and they would actually register. So we almost instantaneously got a huge black registration, and then the question was voting. It took a while to get the black voter to the polls because, you know, they just weren't accustomed to it. Some of them were fearful of it. It was difficult to get them out to register and then follow it through. So following that came reapportionment, which again had the same reason for its coming on the scene. The method that we had used, in the minds of the Congress, as they said, discriminated against the blacks because we would have countywide voting or city-wide voting that would dilute the strength of the black voter. So when that came along, yes, that really did make it a major factor.

CBG: Well, that's more the late sixties.

REM: That's the late sixties when that came. I am trying to think when we had the first reapportionment of the State Senate because we had historically reapportioned the House of Representatives. We were again one of those states that had complied with the mandate of every ten years reapportioning the House of Representatives. The Senate, we felt, was inviolate because ours was set up, patterned exactly after the United States Senate with one senator from each county with the checks and balance system.

CBG: If we think about this range of changes now and go back and pick up the nature of leadership by which blacks and whites could keep

communications open and understanding with each other, how did all of this emerge? Did, for example, the existence of white citizens' councils lay a base for developing a broader . . .

REM: Yes. You know, you really have to quickly distinguish between the old white citizens' councils which were created to preserve the system and these new biracial groups or white councils that were formed among the ministers and lay leaders and all to have a forum, to have a place, where we could have dialogue. The Christian Action Council was formed. It was very instrumental in helping us keep things on an even keel because they brought in there the biracial leadership, the ministers. Then on the other hand, we had the business leadership. South Carolina was fortunate in having some very, very enlightened and strong business leaders who quickly got out front and started putting together groups and forming groups that would help us through this period of time. You go back to John Cauthen, who headed up the Textile Manufacturers Association, and even Mr. Charlie Daniel, who was a participant in all of that. We go back to those early days where we had certain key areas when the leadership was there. The leadership quickly rallied with the Civil Rights Act and what happened in Greensboro, North Carolina, and places like that where they had terrible times, I mean real hostility and demonstrations. It started here and quickly people like Bill Lyles and John Cauthen, Mr. Beverly Herbert, whose now dead, Mr. B. M. Edwards, who headed the South Carolina National Bank, and folks like that who had communications with the black leadership got together and pulled together groups with the support of the mayor, Lester Bates, and formed biracial committees. They sort of opened up these lunch counters very quickly, and the ones that didn't want to open up closed so that we didn't have the confrontations. They worked. Columbia, being the capital city, was

very important because here we had it with the leadership and the community out front doing it. I think that was sort of the forerunner of what followed on in South Carolina.

CBG: Were these types of things negotiated, let's say, in public meetings, or were a lot of the communications sort of . . .

REM: That was all done and it had to be done quietly. It had to be done in places that nobody knew it was going on because, you know, the black leaders would lose credibility, and the white 1eaders, certainly in the early stages, would have some real difficulty because there were just a lot of people who still felt very strongly about it. I can remember there were threats against people who would take a leadership role. Constantly they were under some real pressure. So most of it was done quietly until it was brought to the table, and once it was brought to the table, mostly the decisions had already been made and a plan had been formulated, and then they got public with it.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

CBG: This is Tape 21, Side 2, an interview with Governor Robert E, McNair as a part of the McNair Oral History Project of the South Carolina Department of Archives and History. Today's date is May 9, 1983. Governor McNair, isn't that an example of the classic political dilemma . . .

REM: (chuckles)

CBG: . . . where, in order to be a leader, to keep credibility, you may have to in fact appear to do things or sometimes take a position or take a beating in the press or in public opinion, knowing that the long run is good and perhaps the short run is a necessity, I guess?

REM: That's true. I think a lot of people really suffered from their leadership role, suffered in their businesses, suffered in their personal lives because they were too openly out front too early. I think the same thing happened in the black community. If they had too open communications and seemed to be working too closely, then they lose their supporters and lost their credibility among the people they were working with. So there was a lot of--I don't want to say game playing--but there really was a lot of orchestration going on where people were saying a lot of things publicly and saying some very strong things while at the same time working very closely to help solve problems and help avoid confrontations and avoid hostility.

CBG: There's no school in which they teach that . . .

REM: No. (chuckles)

CBG: . . . is there?

REM: I don't think so. (laughter)

CBG: What is it as an attitude that would, for example, give someone, I guess you would say, the insight or the trust to know that this person with whom you just talked privately over the telephone or privately somewhere whom four hours later you read about in the newspaper has taken a broadside shot at you?

REM: I think it's an instinct really. You miss, but generally you pick people out very quickly, and you can normally tell if you're dealing with them on a comfortable basis, straight forward. You ran into--and you still run into--people who you feel that way about and find out differently. I think it's sort of like a lot of other things. People emerge, and people's relationships develop, their chemistry works, and, you know, that's the way it happens. There's just a comfort level that

you develop. I don't know any way you can define it or how you can determine it until you get into those kinds of things.

CBG: Did this type of thing begin to happen, let's say, specifically in black-white relationships before you became lieutenant governor?

REM: Yes, I think it was way back and in all the communities around. There were people who were in the forefront of movements to try to improve relations, to try to improve health care. You know we had folks who worked with the old county health departments and units to try to bring better health care, and they were primarily working in the black communities. You had a lot of religious leaders who were concerned about the community and the relationships, and so it began to develop. You know, I think, really, in the rural areas the reason we had so little trouble is because that had already been there. The biggest farmer, you know, depended on the black worker and on those people, and he had developed a good feeling, and they felt very close to him. If some stranger came in trying to stir up trouble, the first thing those people would do is go to the man they worked for and talk to him about it and be sure they didn't get into some kind of difficult situation and hostility. The small towns had a lot of that really, and where the biggest problem was in the larger cities where people were more isolated. That's where you had the most trouble because you didn't have that kind of communications. And I think that's the thing in this state. We had, for some reason, historically, had, I really believe, good communications and some form of trust. There was a feeling of trust at that level.

CBG: So the kind of thing that symbolically Mayor Bates and Mr. Lyles and others in Columbia could do at the city level, then would you suggest that Governor [Donald] Russell could do with his inaugural for the state?

REM: Yes. He came along--and again what it is in somebody that gives him those instincts or causes him to do things like that, I don't know. I look on Mr. Russell as a young boy who was sort of born in poverty in Mississippi and came to this state. His mother really was the sole source, and he had to work hard for everything he ever got, and he succeeded, but there was something inside of him that caused him to have a feel, you know, a real deep feeling for people, and he wanted to do something for them, and it began to come out and began to surface. You know, he always had this strong feeling for young people. It caused him to go to the university and caused him to give so much of his money to help young people. That followed right on over as he got more deeply involved and got into this and caused him to have a deep concern, a real compassion, for people.

CBG: Was there concern among people who, let's say, were political managers, that Russell may have been going too far too quick?

REM: Well, I think that happened. All of a sudden, you know, Mr. Russell was having a barbecue on the Mansion grounds for the inauguration. He had just opened it up to the public, and it did create considerable concern and caused him problems that continued to follow him. I think it followed him on into his next election that he may have opened it up too fast, he may have done too much too soon or something of that nature, and that complicated other political problems that he might have developed along the way.

CBG: As lieutenant governor, were you involved in some specific issue areas or specific activities in this general area?

REM: Not to any real deep extent. I had, in running during that time become friendly with Matthew Perry and some of the leaders like that. Matthew being a lawyer, and developing a good relationship with him and a

common respect for him. I enjoyed their friendship and enjoyed their support. That followed on through that period of time, but I was more involved during the brief period of lieutenant governor in the industrial development program and working with it and sort of participating in the beginnings of trying to really do something for education in the state in a broad way and in the beginnings of trying to reopen the state parks and wrestling with that problem of reopening the parks and the integration problem that we'd had when the parks had closed.

CBG: Could you assess your experience as lieutenant governor then as one in which you maintained and improved communications and began to lay the framework for what you might want to do should . . .

REM: Yes.

CBG: . . . the governorship come to you.

REM: Yes. I'm not sure if I had to say why or how, I'm not sure why or how it happened, but I developed a good relationship with the black leaders who were emerging at that time, going on into a political campaign. I've said there were two reasons, one is they had no other choice when I came along because my opposition in the governor's race in the general election was sort of the leader of the resistance movement in the legislature and otherwise I sort of fell heir to that. But at the same time, I had developed communications and, I think, a chemistry with Matthew and then with Reverend Newman and some of the other leaders.

CBG: And these leaders you would have identified as being leaders in church parishes.

REM: It was basically the NAACP. There were very few lawyers, but they were beginning to come on the scene and get involved, and you get to know them and develop a friendship with them and sort of a trust relationship with them.

CBG: And perhaps some administrators, as you were suggesting, school administrators.

REM: School administrators, the school principals, because you'd see them. I recall the ones in Moncks Corner and Allendale. They were looked on as leaders. They were respected as leaders. And we had an excellent relationship practicing law in Allendale, being in the state legislature. Professor Bing as we called him--we didn't do anything without Professor Bing being involved and having his approval, and there was a Butler there--no relation, I don't think to Oscar Butler who was at [South Carolina] State College--that was the football coach and all down there, and again he was just a tremendous leader. Those kinds of people grew up and emerged as leaders. Practicing law and being in the legislature gave you communications with them that continued to grow. So when I got into politics I had those kinds of people who had developed that relationship, who felt comfortable, who were eager to get out and tell others what kind of person you were and that they supported you very strongly. The same thing through the black leaders in Williamsburg and Berkeley County where I'd grown up. I had gotten to know them. ~

CBG: Did that 1964 vote for [Barry] Goldwater in South Carolina affect black perception of national politics at all?

REM: Well, I think, you know, really, they had, since 1948 known but one political party.

CBG: Yes

REM: 1948 was the red flag to them.

CBG: That was the end of black Republicanism.

REM: That's right, the end of black Republicanism. Following on through, you came to young John F. Kennedy who was a hero. So, no, I think that was just a follow-up of 1948, the Goldwater campaign.

REM: That may have been a testament to the lack of black voting registration as well.

REM: Yes, right.

CBG: On becoming governor then was the reopening of the state parks the first big problem in this area that you wrestled with? Do you remember?

REM: (chuckles) I don't really remember.

CBG: Yes.

REM: I think it all happened all at one time,

CBG: At once.

REM: It just started breaking loose. There were so many things that stand in your mind because of the events that look place. I can remember being the first governor in a long time to go up to the Miss South Carolina pageant and to have them host a dinner for us and all of that to meet with all the girls and everything, and I remember sitting in the pageant that first year. I'd just gotten in there when I got an emergency. One of the security fellows, the only one I had, driving me, said, "There's been a shooting. A white fellow shot a black in Allendale down on Flat Street." Mine was, "Oh, my Lord." I knew what that meant. Everything was going to bust loose. A fellow, Hul1 Oswald, whom I had known, was a known drunk, a mean sort of fellow, and he'd just gone down and shot a black. Well, I could see Allendale as an armed camp.

CBG: Just erupting.

REM: So I left Josephine and those at the pageant, and we slipped out back to Columbia with the radio, trying to soothe that down. That was immediately. That was the first thing, and then, of course, getting the parks reopened. We tied that into recreation, opening them up to use for recreation and tourism and all of that. So we tried very hard to skirt the integration question as much as we could, by trying to develop a plan

or a scheme that would take it out of that and put it in another category. So we took the parks as being the basis for a good recreation program in the state. They were there, and people had been denied the use of them. You go to California, you go to other places, and here were the beautiful parks systems. We had them, and it's equal to anything anybody else did, so we wanted to open it up for that purpose.

CBG: Did you justify that then by, say, an economic study?

REM: Yes. We did it on sort of that basis, to take advantage of it. Really, we were wasting a resource in denying the use of it to the people. So why not open it up? Sure, everybody's going to use it.

CBG: Yes.

REM Like Edisto Island, the State Park down there. We didn't have public accommodations there. Why not open it up and let people use it? It's a tremendous, beautiful beach, and it really ought to be used.

CBG: Were there many fears expressed about security?

REM: Lots of fears about all of that and what they would be and the gangs that would run through them and the danger that people would experience and all of that unless we had security, unless we did this, that, or the other. It was all running through. Again, I attribute a lot of that progress to that group of young folks who had come along after World War II, who were becoming active and leaders in the legislature, and who had been around the world and seen a little more and were willing to take some of the risk of moving forward.

CBG: Was there much opposition administratively from the Forestry Commission to give up the parks?

REM: You know, we reopened them first and got them reopened and in use under the Forestry Commission, and the transfer of them came later. That came as we had a study made of the tourism potential in the state. When

that study was in process, we discovered that the parks were a tremendous asset to us. In many places there was no real public access to the beaches for South Carolina people. The study showed the park system was a tremendous asset and ought to be a part of this whole thing, and that's where we conceived of [the Department of] Parks, Recreation, and Tourism. Tourism, you know, we had just done absolutely nothing with. Charleston and Myrtle Beach had chambers and travel divisions, and they had promoted. They were sort of leading the way. The state contributed nothing, never did anything, never even supported them other than we'd give them a few thousand dollars once in awhile for some special promotion. So we had created a division in the State Development Board with one person, a guy named Paul Cook, back then to try to develop a tourism division and tourist promotion. We found that tourism and industrial development were incompatible, and we had as many problems making that work together as we did some of the other problems we were trying to deal with. So we felt we needed to get that out of there, out of the industrial development program and move it out into a separate agency. Then with the outdoor so-called recreation program which had come down with the BOR, Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, funds for developing boating facilities, fishing facilities, the logical place for that was in the Wildlife Department originally, not realizing the latitude and breadth of that program. So then we decided the best thing to do was to move that out because that was the source of funds to do a lot of these things. We had discovered then that regardless of how good departments were to work with that they were very jealous of those funds once they got them, and they weren't too inclined to want to share them with everybody else.

So that's when we determined to pull the Recreation Division out of Wildlife, Tourism out of the Development Board, and the parks system out of Forestry. There was resistance, but by the time we got it, I have to acknowledge that the resistance didn't surface. We were able to get them all together, sit them together, and form that commission with each of those department heads as ex officio members. We wanted them there to help contribute to the transition and to the formulating of a plan for the development and utilization of it.

CBG: So that building then in parks that had been shut down to avoid the racial problem moved through a series of redevelopments under the Forestry Commission . . .

REM: Yes.

CBG: . . . and then coordinating them . . .

REM: Right, and coordinating them on into Parks, Recreation, and Tourism.

CBG: Were there ever any racial incidents or disturbances?

REM: I don't recall ever having any of any significance. There may have been some minor things, but I don't recall ever having anything of significance. One of the things you have to realize is that, as far as the coastal parks where most people go and where most people were anticipating the problem, I think we have to recognize that in that time the blacks did not go to the beaches. You rarely ever saw them utilize the coast, the beaches, and thus it really wasn't the kind of problem we thought. It was still part of that old thing of tradition and a way of life that we were changing and opening them up.

CBG: We've talked a lot about political rights, and I guess have begun to think about economic concerns as well. What about blacks beginning to

organize as labor groups or as negotiating groups? And of course, we've got the development of the hospital unionization effort in Charleston. What was going on in that area?

REM: Well, what we had begun to do is try to open up business and industry to blacks. I can recall having meetings in the governor's office of the top textile leaders and encouraging them to give some thought to building some plants in the lower part of the state and providing jobs. [J. P.] Stevens was good to move into Pamplico and places like that. We had numerous meetings in which we talked about what they could do to help provide job opportunities and move into those areas, and one of the problems we always ran into was the organization problem, the unionization problem. There was a real deep-seated fear that when they moved into those areas and got a substantial number or perhaps a predominantly black labor force, they could be easily organized, that they were susceptible to it at that time, easily led, and you know, overnight you would have a unionized labor force. They were very reluctant to do that. However, back in that time there wren't too many black jobs available in business and industry. It was coming. The industry that came into the state all wanted then to be very choosy in picking their employees. Most of them had the high school diploma or the high school equivalency. That was the reason we got into the adult education program because we soon found that we were developing a labor force shortage, that is, a shortage of qualified or eligible labor. That's when we did that study and discovered the percentage of people that had gone through the eighth grade and dropped out, massive numbers, and we extended the adult literacy on through the twelfth-grade level, to pick up all those people immediately and put them in the labor force. One of the motivations behind that program was to make the blacks

eligible where they could be trainable and put into jobs in business and industry.

CBG: Were the attempts then to organize employees the exception rather than the rule?

REM: It was an exception. There just wasn't much of it. The hospital strike in Charleston was an isolated incident down there that sort of erupted on us. We say it blindsided us. I think it blindsided us because we just were more concerned about building the medical university and developing that hospital so that it would have an image as a medical university hospital. All of us had been concerned about the college and the fact that it was about to lose accreditation, and we poured money into it. We had the hospital there, and it never really had a good image. People were still going to Duke and elsewhere. The doctors in Columbia and above really didn't send their patients to Charleston. Only down in the lowcountry area did they send them, and then they got a substantial amount of the so-called charity cases. It never did become a real sophisticated teaching hospital where people from Greenville and Spartanburg would go there rather than Duke if they had some real problem of some kind. They'd go elsewhere if they could afford to.

So that--the more we think about it--was something that erupted on us that we didn't anticipate. What you have to recall is labor had just decided that public employees was the place to go and that they wanted to make a big push among public employees. You recall they had just formed 1199B, which was the hospital workers' union. We apparently had a real festering sore down in Charleston, both in the administration, employee relations, employee practices, and all, and we had been pouring money in down there, and obviously they'd just been hiring people, just hiring bodies. After the fact, we determined that one of the main sources was

attitudinal, first. That was always the problem, a terrible attitudinal problem of the leadership from the top nurses to the blacks who were nurses' aides and the support facilities, even among the faculty. That was the hot bed of the so-called resistance movement. They were the John Birch conservatives. They were the leaders among that movement back then wanting to repeal the income tax, you recall. They really were just there. That was a hot bed of very conservative faculty members. It was their own little thing. The doctors, we soon discovered, on the faculty were teaching very little and practicing a whole lot. Some of them down there never walked in a classroom. So when you looked at all of that and look back on it, we have to take responsibility for not knowing about it and not delving into it. But it was sort of a place you didn't tread on. You know, Dr. Lynch ran it like it was his and he had a five-member board of doctors who had been on the board all of their lifetime. So you didn't bother with the medical college.

That thing erupted on us. This is pure speculation, that trouble was brewing and the movement was started, and Stokely Carmichael, who had then in those days, come down and visited several times over on the island with Bill Saunders, who's now a very prominent black leader. He visited with Bill, and that was part of that real sort of violent movement at that time. I don't know. I think they just got in there. Unfortunately for them, they picked the wrong place. They picked a public hospital. It was a public entity. I'm not sure they, even when they came in down there, recognized that they were picking a state-supported hospital or university and that they were going to get caught up in a state policy against recognition and collective bargaining.
CBG: That would be interesting to verify. They may have been equally blind-sided.

REM: I'm not sure but what they weren't.

CBG: Yes. Sometimes political scientists talk about a technocratic structure, which is one that deals with highly technical subjects and tends to be a tall organization. Do you think that might be an example of a rigid hierarchy with very specialized types of activities that could really, in effect, rule out a governor delving into what's going on in the way that you might want to?

REM: I really don't think so. I think it came, like we say, from that source, and there were some Catholic nuns and bishops in Charleston that were concerned about it, and the hospital and the relationship and got into the dissatisfaction. Somebody must have called 1199B. Somebody just figured here's a spot for us to go.

CBG: Or a series of frustrations.

REM: Too many people were sitting around running into each other and didn't know what they were supposed to be doing. There was really, as we found out, a total lack of personnel policy and personnel procedures and things like that, pay scales and all, just terrible.

CBG: So with rapid recruitment you could also wind up getting some summary dismissals.

REM: What triggered it, as you recall, was somehow they got into all of this, and then they fired about half a dozen or ten or twelve--I don't recall the number--of the movers in the movement. They just fired all of them, and that's when the whole thing blew up. You know, everybody descended on us.

END OF TAPE